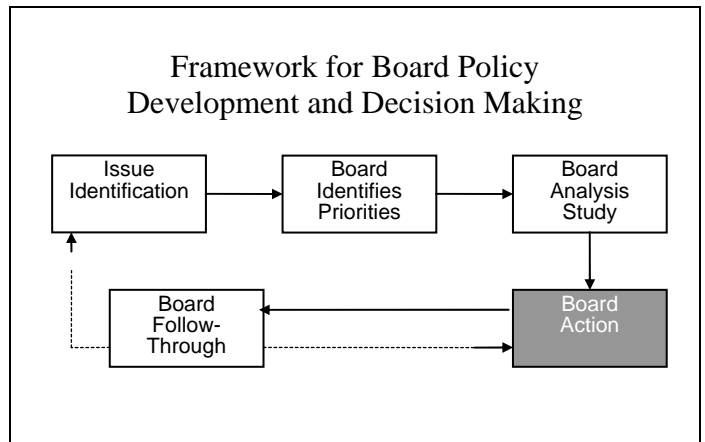


Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

July 26, 2007

**Agenda Item:**

Central College Practitioner Preparation Program

Iowa Goal:

3. Iowans will pursue higher education that results in an improved quality of life supported by better economic opportunities through high skill employment.

Equity Impact Statement:

These rules support the improvement of instructional practices and strengthen the quality of educator preparation and professional development programs to give educators at all levels the skills they need to improve teaching and learning.

Presenter:

Arlie Willems, Administrative Consultant
Practitioner Preparation
Division of PreK-12 Education Programs

Attachments:

1

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the State Board approve the Central College practitioner preparation program through the next state visit cycle scheduled for the 2011-2012 academic year.

Background:

Iowa Code 282—14.102(272) grants authority to the State Board of Education to set standards and approve practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. The Central College program has met the program approval standards as approved by the State Board.

Recommendation for Continuing Approval of Central College

July 26, 2007

Central College, located in Pella, was founded in 1853 by a group of pioneer settlers who emigrated to central Iowa to escape religious tyranny in the Netherlands. The institution grew in both size and mission during its first sixty years, eventually moving to a parcel of land donated by Pella's founding father, Dominie Pieter Schulte. In 1916, the college was transferred from Baptist control to the Reformed Church in America. Central College has been accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools since its initial approval in 1942.

Central College enrolls approximately 1700 students each year. Central's four-year liberal arts curriculum includes more than thirty-six majors and interdisciplinary programs. Generally about 20% of Central College graduates earn degrees in education. Central College offers forty-six teaching endorsements. Around sixty-five candidates are recommended for licensure each year, approximately two-thirds of whom are licensed as elementary teachers.

A day-long preliminary review of the Central College program was conducted on January 19, 2007, by the State Review Panel and the State Review Team. Comments and questions from that review were sent to the Central College program for their response at the time of the review.

The site visit occurred April 22-26, 2007. During that time, team members reviewed documents and interviewed faculty, staff, administrators, students and practitioners affiliated with the Central College program. The team examined six standard areas: Governance and Resources, Diversity, Faculty Performance and Development, Clinical Practice, Assessment of Candidate Knowledge, and Assessment of the Program.

CHAPTER 79

STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

General Comments

- Feedback from graduates, cooperating teachers, and area administrators indicate that the Central Teacher Education Program does an excellent job of preparing new teachers.
- Central teacher candidates/graduates exhibit strong content knowledge. This is a credit to the College, especially the liberal arts courses/faculty and the content major courses/faculty.
- The Central Teacher Academy (CTA) is an impressive and innovative collaborative model.

STANDARD I: GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCES

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The President and Provost both stated strong institutional support for the Teacher Education Program at Central, indicating that the program is valued, indeed vitally important to the college.
- Communication and depth of planning appear strong.
- The elected Teacher Education Committee is involved in reviewing candidates at critical points in the program as well as serving as a valuable internal advisory committee.
- The Teacher Education Advisory Board appears to provide the department with updates of what is happening in P-12 schools as well suggestions/feedback.
- The library is physically close as well as supportive of teacher education; the juvenile collection area and curriculum library are more than adequate.
- Part-time faculty members bring special strengths to the program, are mainly long-term adjuncts, and are evaluated regularly by candidates.
- Resources, facilities, and equipment are commendable. The plans for the new building to house education, psychology and service learning are particularly exciting.
- The funds available for professional development are impressive and demonstrate the institutional support for faculty.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) Generally, it is recognized on campus that the Education Department provides leadership for teacher education. However, the team calls to attention one aspect of governance: the area of secondary education. The team makes two recommendations:
 - a) Formalization of the informal relationship between the Education Department and the secondary programs working with teacher candidates.
 - b) Direction and support from the Provost's Office in communicating and implementing the structure described above.
- 3) The team recommends finding a way to more effectively elicit views of cooperating teachers.

- 4) The team has some concern regarding the workload of Education Department faculty. Examples include:
 - a) responsibilities of field placement without accompanying credit hours.
 - b) use of one and two-credit hour courses.
 - c) inadequate credit load for student teaching supervision.
- 5) The position of Department Chair should be given a greater course-load reduction in order to effectively manage department work.
- 6) The team asks the administration to consider the fulltime staffing in the Education Department. If concerns described above are addressed, additional resources and perhaps a faculty line will be needed.

Item that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None.

STANDARD II: DIVERSITY

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The unit and college seem to make every effort to recruit faculty and staff from under-represented populations.
- The unit and campus recognize the concept of diversity broadly and consistently. The emphases on social justice, service learning and volunteerism lead candidates to recognize the needs and humanity of under-represented groups.
- College requirements assure that all students have experiences that allow them to experience the world from the position of a minority individual. The unit actively promotes candidate participation in the travel-abroad program where candidates are likely to have an immersion program as a minority.
- The institution provides strong support for students with academic needs, especially for the high number of first-generation college students.
- A quote from a student represents a general theme heard often from candidates: "Compassion is central at Central."

Concerns/Recommendations: The field experiences associated with the human relations course are commendable in many respects, but the array of placements may not allow each student to observe and participate in an actual teaching and learning setting with diverse learners.

Items that Must Be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD III: FACULTY

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- The Education Department includes strong, well-prepared and experienced full-time faculty with a high percentage holding a terminal degree and the rank of full or associate professor.
- Candidates repeatedly noted the accessibility of faculty and the strong commitment of individual faculty members to the success of each candidate.
- Evidence exists of a wide variety of collaboration activities with internal and external groups and extensive involvement in a variety of institutional, professional and community activities.
- Significant funds are provided annually for professional development and can be carried over for two years to combine funds for more expensive endeavors.
- Faculty members have good relationships with schools.
- The department has connections to a committed adjunct faculty pool as a resource when needed.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The team recommends attention to improved consistency among the course syllabi of the secondary specific methods.
- 2) The Department may consider providing in-service training to faculty regarding the newest technology in the classrooms, particularly for the Smart Board.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD IV: CLINICAL

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- Field experiences at different levels early in the program provide candidates with valuable opportunities to explore options in teaching and are helpful as candidates make decisions regarding which arena of teaching to pursue.
- Candidates exhibit excellent preparation in content, management, and planning. Stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive in regards to these areas.
- The faculty and staff provide strong personal support and are accessible to students.
- The Central Teaching Academy (CTA) is a superb example of a collaborative effort among Pella schools, Heartland AEA, and Central's Education Department.

COMMENTS FROM COOPERATING TEACHERS/PRINCIPALS:

- The majority of student teachers are excellent and well prepared in content, management, technology, planning and human relationships.
- “It’s so valuable that student teachers are out in the field spending so much time in the classroom before they decide what they want to do.”
- “Central has good support, advising, resources, equipment, information, even job search and career help. He (the student teacher) is good at pulling out current, recent material so the information is always relevant. He knows how to hook them.”
- “Student teachers from Central are confident because their skills, strategies, and content are in place already so they are ready to go. Central student teachers seem to have a passion for teaching, are in education for the right reasons.”
- “My student teacher’s preparation is a thousand times better than my own.”
- “I appreciate how well prepared they are in research based areas like reading strategies. They are better prepared than our veteran teachers.”
- “His technology abilities are amazing. He is my mentor.”

COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS/STUDENT TEACHERS:

- Several students reported that professors were always accessible.
- Many students were grateful to be exposed to standards from the beginning of their program. They appreciated the regular constructive feedback, the practical level of instruction, the small class sizes, and the intimate environment that allowed them to perform the technology infused into all classes.
- “I know that you have to learn management on the job, but we got good preparation in a real situation because our professors asked students to misbehave in the course and we had to respond.”
- “A real strength is the 30 hours of observation in Foundations class. I saw different levels so I could find the right one for me.”
- “They have confidence in us so we have confidence and don’t doubt ourselves.”
- “I understand differentiation. I can modify a lesson for a student.”
- “Why are you even bothering to visit? They are fantastic.”

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The team recommends that a remediation plan be in place to accommodate a candidate that might be struggling or deficient.
- 2) The team recommends that the mid-term and final evaluation forms be examined to ensure that competencies are clearly articulated and connected to program standards.
- 3) Even though all students cannot enroll in Central Teaching Academy, perhaps aspects from CTA such as tool kit strategies and/or reading strategies could be made available to all teacher preparation candidates.
- 4) The team recommends stronger emphasis on candidates’ use of student assessment in adjusting instruction.
- 5) The team strongly encourages the department and institution to revisit the minimal three visits per each eight week student teaching placement in order to provide more support. We recommend additional release time or new faculty to accommodate a minimum of one visit every two weeks in order to provide continuity in visits.
- 6) One stakeholder commented that while candidates are well prepared to meet the needs of lower performing students, they are not receiving an equal emphasis in their preparation to meet the needs of gifted and talented or high achieving students.
- 7) The team encourages the Department to continue its sensitive approach to the possibility of the creation of a two-tiered program with the success of CTA.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD V: CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

Initial Team Finding

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- Careful assessment is being done at the candidate level.
- Multiple criteria and assessment are used in candidate assessment.
- A multitude of indicators have been identified in courses to prove “competency”—both dispositional and knowledge-based. A great deal of work has been done to outline these as they relate to the 10 goals adopted by Central as well as alignment with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the Iowa Teaching Standards. The performance of candidates is being measured against these standards.
- The implementation of the requirement of candidates to meet all competencies assigned to a course prior to passing the course strengthens the use of the competencies.

Concerns/Recommendations

- 1) The Early Childhood Program appears to offer solid field experiences for the candidates. The professor appears to have strong experiences as a practitioner. However, the team recommends the EC program consider more collaboration with the K-6 program with specific attention to INTASC and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards.
- 2) During some of the discussions, feedback from student teachers indicates the curriculum for ESL needs to be reshaped to better meet their needs. It appears that this is currently being done and will be enhanced by support from the state Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant.
- 3) The team found it somewhat difficult to discern the “big picture” as to how candidates are assessed developmentally throughout the program. A mapping of the competencies and review of any current rubrics used would be helpful to the program in determining this holistic view.
- 4) Secondary students expressed their concerns over a “disconnect” with the education program compared to their elementary counterparts. The team encourages increasing communication with secondary candidates and faculty through an enhanced governance structure addressed in Standard 1.
- 5) The team encourages Central to look at dispositions and formalize the process through which they are articulated and assessed.
- 6) The team was unable to locate substantive evidence that candidates are utilizing pre/post assessments and student achievement data for decision-making to guide instruction. We encourage an emphasis on this component of the assessment standard throughout the program.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: None

STANDARD VI: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Initial Team Findings

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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Strengths

- Input for developing the assessment system was recruited from many stakeholders.
- A movement to an electronic-based system should make collection and use of data easier.
- Surveys of alumni and employers inform program assessment.

Concerns/Recommendations

The team realizes that unit evaluation and the assessment system is under development. However, we have concerns about some of the data under consideration for unit evaluation. Specifically:

- 1) The course-embedded competencies, which may be quite useful for candidate assessment, do not provide data in a form useful for program level assessment.
- 2) The assessment of course competencies does not seem to include rubrics that give clear specification of performance requirements for students and for consistent evaluation by faculty.
- 3) Teaching programs seem to have a very strong clinical component, but performance in these settings does not seem to be part of the unit assessment system
- 4) Surveys of alumni and employers might be modified to include questions that tap all program goals and outcomes.

Items that must be Addressed Prior to State Board Action: The Central Teacher Education Program is asked to share with the State a plan of action that will address:

- 1) Development of an assessment plan to improve unit planning and evaluation;
- 2) Development of rubrics to clarify expectations and criteria for assessment.

Institution's Response

The chair of the Education Department and another faculty member attended the Assessment Summit on June 1, 2007. Discussions are being held to develop an assessment plan to improve unit planning and evaluation. Central College plans on applying for a second year of Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant (TQE) funding. The funds will be used to support a departmental two day retreat for the development of a program assessment plan. Funds will also be designated for IT staff to work with the Education Department on developing the structure needed for program evaluation. Once the format has been determined, departmental faculty will develop rubrics and tools to clarify expectations and criteria for assessment.

Final Recommendation: Now that the above items have been addressed, this standard area is met.

Met Or Met with Strength	Met Pending Conditions Noted Below	Not Met
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